

THE
C A S E
OF THE
Fishermen in KENT:

Humbly Offered to the Consideration of the Parliament.

THAT the Fishermen Inhabiting within the Liberty of the Vice-Admiralty of *Kent*, may not be brought into a Corporation or Company with the Fishermen of *London* or *River Thames*.

And that the Fishermen of *London* and *River Thames* may not be allowed to Drudge for Oysters within the Liberty of the said Vice-Admiralty.

THe said Vice-Admiralty extends throughout the whole County of *Kent*, as well in, upon, or by the Sea, or publick Rivers, or fresh Water Channels, Ports, Creeks, and all other places whatsoever overflown, between the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, and to the full and high Water, or upon the Shoars or Banks whatsoever adjacent from all chief Bridges downwards towards the Sea.

There are many Towns of Note within this Liberty; as *Rochester*, *Strood*, *Chatham*, *Milton*, *Faversham*, *Whitstable*, *Herne*, *Reculver*, *Herchington*, *Margaret*, *Kingsgate*, *Broadstaires*, *Ramsgate*.

Within the said Vice-Admiralty there have Courts been kept time out of mind for Rectifying and Correcting all Abuses done upon the Waters, &c. within that Jurisdiction.

And in particular, a Court is kept at Pleasure for the well ordering of the Oyster Grounds within the said Vice-Admiralty; And for Correcting all Offences and Misdemeanors done by the Fishers therein, contrary to the Orders of that Court. And the Authority of the same Court hath time out of Mind prohibited the Drudging for Oysters within the said Liberty, by all Persons whatsoever, who have not served their Time to Fishermen Inhabiting within that Liberty.

All Fishermen within the said Liberty are at the Command of that Vice-Admiralty upon all Occasions; but more especially for Their Majesties Service. And for that purpose there is a Register kept in the Vice-Admiralty-Office of the Names of all Fishermen and their Servants, and places of abode within the said River, that their Attendance may be required whenever it shall be thought fit.

And most of Their Majesties Ships lying in Harbour at *Chatham*; The Fishermen within this Liberty are constantly called to assist in the Rigging of the Royal Navy; And whenever it puts to Sea, most of the ablest and best Seamen amongst them are constantly engaged in that Service.

So that if the Fishermen of *London*, or the *River Thames*, shall have the benefit of Drudging for Oysters within this Liberty of the Vice-Admiralty, or be let in to enjoy the rest of the Priviledges there; it not only destroys the most Antient Jurisdiction and Courts of the Vice-Admiralty of *Kent*; but will Ruine all the Fishermen there; (who are many Thousand Families) And destroy the best Nursery and Breed of Seamen and Mariners in *England* by taking from them their Trade and only Encouragement and Support.